

Remarks

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-8 under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Rapoza et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,561,811) ("Rapoza").

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's indication that claims 1-8 are anticipated by Rapoza. However, in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants have further amended claim 1 in order to more clearly define the present invention and to further distinguish it from the prior art.

More particularly, claim 1 has been amended to call for a method for teaching an individual, the method comprising, *inter alia*, providing a virtual world, and teaching the individual a desired skill by inducing the individual to actively teach the desired skill to a virtual character within the virtual environment by providing a virtual character with the instructions needed to learn the desired skill, wherein the teaching of the individual is carried out by: (i) prompting the individual to provide a virtual character with the instructions necessary to explicitly teach the desired skill to the virtual character within said virtual environment; and (ii) providing a positive response to the individual when the virtual character learns the desired skill.

Furthermore, claim 1 has also been amended to call for at least one of the virtual elements in the virtual world comprising a virtual character comprising a behavior state, an emotion state and a learning state, and wherein said behavior state, said emotion state and said learning state are capable of changing in response to (i) interaction with other virtual elements within the virtual environment, and/or (ii) commands from the user

controls, with the learning state comprising a node-based system capable of dynamically adding new sets of nodes, whereby the virtual character is capable of learning a new skill which extends beyond a pre-existing set of nodes.

Applicants believe that the present invention, as recited in claim 1, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Rapoza.

Applicants do not believe that Rapoza teaches a virtual character comprising a behavior state, an emotion state and a learning state, wherein the learning state comprises a node-based system capable of dynamically adding new sets of nodes, whereby the virtual character is capable of learning a new skill which extends beyond a pre-existing set of nodes.

Applicants believe that Rapoza discloses a video game comprising a player-character with a set of attributes and skills which permit a player to experience the negative effects of substance abuse on an individual, family and friends, and thus experience the adverse consequences of drug abuse. Applicants believe that the player-character in Rapoza has a fixed database of attributes such as intelligence, confidence or charisma, which may have its value adjusted but never added to, and which has a pre-set relationship between the attributes.

In contrast, the learning state of the virtual character of the present invention is dynamic and continuously growing, based on input from an individual or other virtual elements within the virtual world.

In contrast to the virtual character in Applicants' invention, which is capable of learning a new skill extending beyond a pre-existing set of nodes, the game player in Rapoza may only change the attributes and skills associated with a player-character by selecting the attributes and/or skills from an

existing database of attributes and skills. The game player can not add to the pre-existing database of attributes and skills associated with the player-character in Rapoza.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that claim 1 is in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

In addition, claims 4-8, which depend from claim 1, either directly or indirectly, are believed to be allowable at least through dependency.

Thus, Applicants believe that this patent application is now in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

In the event that any fees may be required in this matter, please charge the same to Deposit Account No. 16-0221.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

*Mark J. Pandiscio* 6/30/08

Mark J. Pandiscio  
Registration No. 30,883  
Pandiscio & Pandiscio, P.C.  
470 Totten Pond Road  
Waltham, MA 02451-1914  
Tel. No.: (781) 290-0060

MMS/INGEENI3.AMD4